

## **EAST HERTS DISTRICT PLAN 2011-2033: EIP – PART 1**

### **MATTER 1: GENERAL MATTERS**

#### **REPRESENTATIONS PREPARED BY LICHFIELDS ON BEHALF OF ST WILLIAM HOMES**

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**2. In overall terms has the Council engaged constructively? What has been the outcome of co-operation and how has this been addressed? Are there any matters to resolve?**

- 1 St William has sought to engage with the Council over the last two years with regards to draft policy HERT 2 allocation.
- 2 In light of a lack of robust evidence as to the need for employment uses on the site, St William were keen to explore the scope to provide more new homes on the HERT2 site. This would boost the supply of housing and assist in meeting the OAN within the first 5 years, by making efficient use of previously developed land at a sustainable and accessible location that would reduce the reliance on the need for Green Belt release.
- 3 The Council were reluctant to constructively engage in discussions regarding the draft site allocation and explore this potential further. Officers indicated that there may be scope to relax the employment requirement on the site, but this has not been followed through in the draft Plan. It is considered that the Council should have explored the delivery of more homes on urban sites during the plan making process.
- 4 A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) has been prepared with East Herts Council and Norbury Woodyard (the 2 land owners of the draft HERT2 Allocation) with regards to the redevelopment of the site to demonstrate that there are no constraints to development and the delivery of homes on site could be achieved within 5 years, which follows the NPPF approach of ensuring designated sites are achievable, deliverable and available.
- 5 The agreement of a SoCG with the Council has been a long, drawn out process due to the level of detail to be agreed and 'matters to be resolved' in particular with regards to the need for a masterplan to be prepared.
- 6 In particular, whilst St William agree to the principle of a masterplan being prepared and stated that this could be done as part of the decision making process, they do not agree to the process as set out in the Cabinet Report to the Executive Panel on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The Cabinet Report states that '*for strategic sites (generally those over 500 homes) the District Plan sets out a specific policy requirement that prior to the submission of any planning application, a masterplan should be prepared*'. The HERT 2 site was not defined as a strategic site in the Cabinet Report.
- 7 Throughout the plan making process, at no time did draft policy make reference to the need for a Masterplan, nor does the current policy in the draft plan require this and this matter has not been consulted upon by the Council. In addition, a masterplan for the HERT2 site has already been prepared and adopted by the Council in 2014 through the Urban Design Framework.
- 8 St William agree for the allocated site to be comprehensively planned but consider that the site is capable of being built out in independent phases. The informal approval of a masterplan prior to submission is not necessary for the site to come forward comprehensively.
- 9 It is considered that this rigid adherence to the requirement for a masterplan on all sites, including this relatively small urban site (where there is already an Urban Framework), will impact on potential delivery and this matter should have been addressed more constructively.